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ABSTRACT

As a result of the educational reform movement of the 1980s, there has been increased emphasis on joint efforts between the private sector and the educational system. Although early efforts focused on college-bound youth, changing demographics, a decline in the nation's productivity, and heightened international competition have increased concern about the economic well-being of noncollege-bound youth as well. The need to maintain a productive and competitive work force is placing new demands on education to make a greater contribution to economic development. To achieve this, vocational educators must be willing to engage in partnerships with employers, labor, government, and other institutions. Although partnerships between educators and business/industry/labor are growing in number and substance, limited success has been achieved in efforts to link public and private sectors in the broad-based and extensive local cooperation necessary to have long-term and substantial impact. The trend toward increased collaboration between vocational education and business/labor/industry will continue, but issues will be raised about the direction and forms of the collaboration--how much, what kind, who will manage it, and where will the resources come from? (This publication contains an annotated list of 16 print resources and 8 resource organizations.) (KC)

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT WITH BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/LABOR

TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS

Susan Imel

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career,
and Vocational Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT WITH BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/LABOR

One consequence of the educational reform movement of the 1980s has been the clamor for additional joint efforts between the private sector and the education system (Hoyt 1991). Although early educational reform efforts focused primarily on the needs of college-bound youth, recent reports stress the need to improve the connection between education and work (National Center on Education and the Economy 1990; William T. Grant Foundation 1988). Changing demographics, a decline in the nation's productivity, heightened international competition, and concern about the economic well-being of youth have increased sensitivity to the requirements of noncollege-bound youth. The need to maintain a productive and competitive work force is placing new demands on education to make a greater contribution to economic development. To achieve this, vocational educators must be willing to engage in partnerships with employers, labor, government, and other education institutions (Griffin 1989).

Although partnerships between educators and business/industry/labor are growing in number and becoming more sophisticated, there has been limited success to date with efforts to link public and private sectors in the broad-based and extensive local cooperation necessary to have long-term and substantial impact. Compared to the magnitude of the effort that is required, these endeavors are few and small in number but they do indicate the direction that collaborative alliances must take. Partnerships currently in operation can be grouped into two broad categories: open-ended collaborations and project-specific collaborations (Smith and Trist 1988).

Open-ended collaborations are cooperative efforts between two or more institutions that set broad, long-term goals. Examples include industry-education councils, school-business partnerships, and quasi-public skills brokering corporations. Project-specific collaborations are cooperative efforts that are intended to meet more narrowly defined, short-term goals such as specific skill needs. Some examples are union training programs, contract training, and employer-based training funded by states (ibid.).

The trend toward increased collaboration between vocational education and business/industry/labor will continue, but there are some policy issues around the direction these efforts should take and the best forms of collaboration to try. At one level is the debate about how much and what kind of education is enough. Questions such as "What should be taught, to whom, and in what setting or context?" are affiliated with this discussion. At another level, organizational questions about how the collaborations should be managed are raised. Fundamental to this debate is the question "Which institutions should handle which role in training the nation's work force?" (ibid.).

Vocational educators wishing to launch or enhance collaborative efforts with business/industry/labor may be more concerned with factors that contribute to successful collaborative ventures than with policy issues. Questions that they need to consider in thinking about collaboration include "Will the collaborative effort be a priority and will there be adequate resources appropriated to make it work?"; "Will the effort be thought of as a long-term investment?"; "Will the partnership become institutionalized?"; "Will there be adequate communication structures to keep all partners informed?"; and "Can consensus be reached on short- and long-term goals?" (Axelrod 1989).

This *Trends and Issues Alert* contains resources that vocational educators can use in developing partnerships with business/industry, labor. Both print resources and organizations that can be consulted for further information are included.

Print Resources

Axelrod, V. M. "Collaboration in the 21st Century." Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Vocational Education and Training Association, Orlando, FL, December 1989. (ED 317 799).

Describes eight characteristics of effective linkages.

Beckwith, R.; and others. ***Advice to the Private Sector. Report 3.*** Springfield: Illinois State Council on Vocational Education, March 1989. (ED 318 873).

Includes six key actions the private sector might undertake to assist with the modernization of vocational education and the improvement of educational programs in Illinois.

Collingwood, J.; Cutlip, M; and Lee, R. "Training Work Forces during Changing Times." Paper presented at the national conference of the American Technical Education Association, Fort Worth, TX, March 1989. (ED 307 929).

Describes the Des Moines Area Community College industry outreach effort that is administered by the Economic Development Group, an entrepreneurial center that employs 45 training consultants and support staff.

Dorsten, L. E., and Hollenbeck, K. ***Private Sector Participation with Postsecondary Institutions. Final Report.*** Columbus: Center on Education and Training for Employment, The Ohio State University, May 1989. (ED 307 405).

Reports the results of a study that collected and examined information on the nature and extent of business and postsecondary occupational program linkages. Data from 76 postsecondary administrators and 661 employers are included.

Gordon, H. R. ***Ways in Which Vocational Education and Postsecondary Institutions Can Establish Effective Linkages with Employers.*** Jacksonville: Florida Community College, [1989]. (ED 314 106).

Reports on the results of several studies that collected data from educational institutions and employers to identify motives for participating in collaborative arrangements.

Griffin, D. "Joint Ventures: A New Agenda for Education." *Vocational Education Journal* 64, no. 3 (April 1989): 24-25, 45.

Examples of current economic development partnership programs between vocational education and industry, labor, and governmentare described and ideas for forming joint ventures are shared.

Hoyt, K. "Education Reform and Relationships between the Private Sector and Education: A Call for Integration." *Phi Delta Kappan* 72, no. 6 (February 1991): 450-453.

Proposes four strategies for bringing about closer ties in the relationships between education and work.

Lacey, R. A., and Kingsley, C. ***A Guide to Working Partnerships***. Waltham, MA: Center for Human Resources, Brandeis University, 1988. (ED 295 001).

Focuses on implementation issues from the experiences of 21 work-education partnership projects fostered by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

Lefkowitz, B.; Kingsley, C.; and Hahn, A. ***Working Partnerships Casebook***. Waltham, MA: Center for Human Resources, Brandeis University, 1987. (ED 295 002).

Includes three case studies that illustrate common experiences encountered by 21 work-education partnerships fostered by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

McNelly, D. E., and Searle, M. A. ***Private Sector Initiatives to Modernize Vocational Education***. Knoxville: Department of Technological and Adult Education, University of Tennessee, August 1989. (ED 317 751).

Reports on a study conducted to identify and analyze the involvement of secondary vocational education and business and industry in joint partnership agreements in Tennessee.

National Alliance of Business. ***The Compact Project: School-Business Partnerships for Improving Education***. Washington, DC: NAB, 1989. (ED 312 487).

Contains individual profiles of 12 cities engaged in school-business partnership efforts and lessons learned from their experiences.

National Center on Education and the Economy. ***America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!*** The Report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. Rochester, NY: NCEE, June 1990. (ED 323 297).

Describes the choice the United States faces between high skills and low wages and makes recommendations for changing the approach to work and education that will lead to a choice for high skills.

National Child Labor Committee. ***Report on Study of Existing and Potential Linkages between Apprenticeship and Cooperative Education***. New York, NY: NCLC, September 1988. (ED 313 545).

Reports on the results of a study of the status and potential of links between apprenticeship and cooperative education to determine whether and how resources should be expended to increase and strengthen those linkages.

Smith, T. J., and Trist, C. ***Training and Educating the Work Force in the Nineties: The Rationale for Public-Private Collaboration. Information Series no. 331***. Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center on Education for Training and Employment, The Ohio State University, 1988. (ED 303 679).

Provides a rationale for public-private linkages to improve training, describes existing forms of collaboration, and makes recommendations for policy initiatives.

William T. Grant Foundation. ***The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America***. An Interim Report on the School-to-Work Transition. Washington, DC: Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, WTGF, January 1988. (ED 290 822).

Contains an analysis of ways to improve the school-to-work transition, including tapping the resources of the community and the workplace.

Yin, R. K.; and others. ***Interorganizational Partnerships in Local Job Creating and Job Training Efforts: Six Case Studies. Final Report***. Washington, DC: COSMOS Corporation, September 1989. (ED 313 578).

Examines six cases where job training and economic development were successfully linked through an interogranizational arrangement.

Resource Organizations

AFL-CIO, Education Department, 815 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 (202/638-3912).

American Vocational Association, 1410 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (703/683-3111).

Center for Human Resources, Heller Graduate School, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02254-9110 (617/736-3770).

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090 (800/848-4815; 614/292-4353).

Labor/Higher Education Council, 3429 34th Place, NW, Washington, DC 20016 (202/362-1522).

National Alliance of Business, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005 (202/289-2910).

Public/Private Ventures, 399 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 (215/592-9099).

William T. Grant Foundation, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20036-5541 (202/775-9731).

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